the county.

When about twenty-five years of age he came under the influence of Charles See, who taught in the family of Colonel Paul McNeel, and there was kindled in our young friend's mind an irresistible desire for a college education. He learned the rudiments of Latin and algebra from Mr See, went a session or two at Academy and then away to Dickinson College, in Pennsylvania, and was graduated among the best in his class. In the meantime he had professed piety, entered the ministry, and became a noted pulpit orator, and one of the most distinguished teachers of the high schools under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal church, South. He died a few years since at Winchester; leaving a reputation long to be remembered by his denomination. Recently one of his surviving children, an accomplished daughter visited Marlinton.

The writer tenderly cherishes the memory of this remarkable Pocahontas man, for he often manifested special friendship for me, and we have had many good talks together. We last met in Winchester, in October, 1874. He introduced me to Norval Wilson, father of Bishop Wilson.

JOHN McNEEL.

John McNeel, the ancestor of the McNeel relationship in our county, appears to have been the first to occupy the Little Levels by permanent settlement. He was a native of Frederick County, Virginia, but passed much of his early life in or near Cumberland, Mary-

land. He seems to have been fond of athletics, and in a pugilistic contest his antagonist was so badly knocked out as to be regarded fatally injured. To avoid arrest and trial for murder, he refugeed. He followed the trend of the Alleghanies. A long while was spent in their gloomy solitudes, and his sufferings of mind and body can not be even imagined by any of us. Finally, going deeper and deeper into the wilderness, he came at last in view of the Levels, about 1765.

As he overlooked this section from some neighboring eminence, he saw much to remind him of his native region. An extensive, wooded plain, bordered by mountain ranges of unsurpassed beauty, and very fertile. He decided, as every thing looked so much like the old home scenery, to settle here; and chose a site for his cabin near the present home occupied by Hon. M. J. McNeel. Traces of this cabin have been seen by many persons yet living, between the gate on the public road and his residence. If the spot could be identified, it would be well to mark it with a piece of the marble recently found in such fabulous quantities close by.

Here the solitary man brooded over his supposed guilt, prayed with his broken heart for pardon, and hunted for his food, subsisting almost entirely upon venison and trout. One day while hunting he met Charles and Edward Kinnison, from his old home, who had come out here prospecting for a situation. He learned from them that the person he boxed with was not dead, not even seriously hurt. This was indeed good news, and then and there he felt free from all

bloody stain, and he could return without fear of molestation.

John McNeel insisted upon his friends to share his cabin with him. He assisted them in making a selection for a home adjoining his tract. The three then set out on their return to the lower Valley of Virginia.

While on this visit home John McNeel married Martha Davis, who was born in Wales in 1740, and soon after their marriage they came out to the Levels. A few acres were soon cleared off, and plenty to subsist upon was raised.

Mr McNeel seemed deeply impressed with a sense of gratitude to God for his providential care, after all his wanderings and fears to permit the lines to fall to him in such a pleasant, wealthy place, that he built a house for worship, the White Pole Church.

In a few years the Dunmore war opened up. The three friends,—McNeel and two Kinnisons,—went into camp at Lewisburg, and joined the expedition to Point Pleasant, October 10, 1784. They survived that eventful and important contest, came back, but not to remain very long. They went across the eastern mountains and enlisted in some company that went from Frederick County, served during the Revolution, and then took up the peaceful tenor of their lives where they had left off. There is a pathetic tradition that while Mr McNeel was absent to Point Pleasant a child was born and died before his return. The mother with her own hands prepared the coffin and the grave, and buried it. They reared five children, two sons and three daughters.

Miriam married John Jordan, and lived near Locust on what is now known as the Jordan Place, owned by Isaac McNeel. They reared three daughters and five sons. Particular mention of these in the John Jordan paper.

Nancy McNeel, second daughter of the pioneer, married Richard Hill.

Martha, the pioneer's third daughter, married Griffin Evans, moved west and settled on the Miami River.

Our venerable pioneer reared two sons, Abram and Isaac.

Abram first married a Miss Lamb. Her brother, William Lamb, was greatly esteemed by Abram McNeel, and he named his son for him. William Lamb was an expert Artisan. The late Captain McNeel had a clock made by this person that was one of the most elegant specimens of its kind to be found anywhere. There was one daughter, Elizabeth, who was married to William Hanna, of Greenbrier County.

Abram McNeel's second wife was Miss Bridger, relative of the slain Bridger Brothers. By this marriage there were three sons, Washington, who died in youth; John; and Abram, who went west. The daughters of this second marriage were Margaret, who married the late William Beard of Renick's Valley, and she has been dead but a short while.

Martha married Bayliss Butcher, and went west. One of her sons practiced medicine in our county a few years since, Dr F. Butcher.

Miriam, another daughter, married Christopher Beard, and her son Dr Beard is a prominent physician

in Lewisburg.

Nancy McNeel married James Rankin, and lived on the Greenbrier at the mouth of Locust.

Mary was a lifelong invalid, and never married.

Abram McNeel's third wife was Magdalen Kelly, of Monroe County. At the time of their marriage she was the widow Haynes. Rev James Haynes is a grandson of her first husband. The children of this third marriage were Henry Washington and William Lamb.

Henry Washington has lived mostly in the west, and has led a busy life for many years, and is there now.

Captain William Lamb McNeel, lately deceased, lived on the old homestead. He held many positions of trust, and met the expectations of his most admiring friends, in the camp, the legislature, and in business affairs.

Isaac McNeel, the other son of the pioneer, settled upon lands now held by the family of the late Jacob McNeel, M. J. McNeel, W. T. Beard, and C. E. Beard. His first wife was Rachel McKeever. By this marriage there were four sons, Paul, John, Richard, and Isaac. The daughters were Hannah, Martha, Nancy, and Rachel.

Hannah married Benjamin Wallace, of Bath County Virginia. Dr Matt Wallace, an eminent physician at Mill Point, lately deceased, was her son. Her daughter, Rachel, became Mrs William Hefner, a prominent citizen of Braxton County. Her other daughter Elizabeth married Christopher Jordan.

Martha McNeel married David McCue, of Nicholas

County.

Nancy, the third daughter, married William C. Price late of Huttonsville, Randolph County.

Rachel McNeel married Jacob Crouch, of Randolph County.

In reference to the sons of the first marriage it will be remembered that Colonel Paul McNeel was one of the most widely known citizens of his day.

John McNeel's sons are Isaac McNeel and Hon. M. J. McNeel, of the Levels.

Richard McNeel's daughter, Mary, is the wife of W. T. Beard, whose sons, Edgar and Lee, are well known.

Isaac McNeel served as Sheriff a number of years, and went west.

By his second marriage, Isaac McNeel, son of John, the pioneer, to Ann Seybert, daughter of Jacob Seybert, mouth of Stamping Creek, there were two sons, Jacob and Samuel Ellis. The latter died a soldier in the war.

The daughters of the second marriage were Catherine, who became the wife of Charles Wade, of Green Hill, Virginia; Elizabeth married Jacob Sharp, near Edray; Miriam married Joseph McClung, of Nicholas County; Magdalen married Dr Robert Williams, of Bath, Virginia.

This brings the chronicles of the venerable pioneer's family down within the memory and observation of the living. His life was of no ordinary interest. His righteous memory should be in everlasting remembrance. He was the first to "wail with judicious care" amid these mountains the hymns sung by his ancestry

amid the moors of Scotlond, the men of the moss hags.

But very little, if any of the lands he preempted has passed out of the possession of the relationship, now in the third and fourth generation, a very remarkable circumstance in the history of American families.

John A. McNeel, a great grandson, furnishes the following data:

"The knowledge I have of my great-grandfather is purely traditional, but with one link of tradition, and that one my father, the late Paul McNeel, of Pocahontas County. John McNeel, Senior, was born in the year 1745, and was 80 years old when he died, his death occurring in 1825. Paul McNeel was born within sight of his grandfather's house, in the year 1803. He was consequently 22 years of age at his grandfather's death. There was an intimacy between these two people, as I have often learned from my father, that was only ended by the death of the older McNeel.

"Paul McNeel was taken at an early age to live with his grandparents. I have heard him relate an incident to fix his very earliest recollections of his grandparents which was this: His grandmother had given him a piece of wheat bread and butter, (quite a luxury then), and set the little boy down to eat it. When left alone a large tomcat came up to divide the boy's meal. A fight followed, and the boy threw the cat in the fire, where there happened to be a bed of coals. The coals stuck to the cat's fur, the cat ran and screamed, until the boy was scared out of his wits. He too ran home as fast as he could. This occurred when Paul McNeel

was six years old, in the old house in the rear of M. J. McNeel's residence.

"As I say, Paul McNeel at a tender age became an inmate of his grandparent's home, and to a great degree received his early training from them. The death of his mother, Mrs Rachel McNeel, occurred in 1818, when he was only 15 years old, rendered his dependence on his grandparents the more necessary. There is a field belonging to the estate of the late Jacob McNeel that my father has frequently in passing pointed out to me, which he and his grandfather planted in corn (they doing the dropping) in 1825; and in connection he told how active of body and sound of mind his grandfather was at eighty, and soon after this the old gentleman was seized with pneumonia and died.

"I have related these two incidents—the beginning and ending of the acquaintance of these two people—to show you how thoroughly I have been taught, both by "legend and lay," to know and revere the character of the venerable pioneer. The exact spots where the "White Pole Church" and the "First Camp" were built have been pointed out to me; and, as you suggest both should be marked by a slab of the marble that is found in such abundance close by.

"Martha Davis, the wife of this gentleman, was a Welch girl, a Calvinistic Methodist, born in the year 1742, being therefore several years older than her husband. She survived him five years, being 88 years old at the time of her death. You speak of the death of her child during the absence of her husband to Point Pleasant. Of this I have frequently heard, and that

she with her own hands prepared the body of her child and performed the first burial rites ever performed at the McNeel graveyard.

There was another matter this lady was the first to do, and for which her name deserves to be kept in dear remembrance, and by this latter act to the living generation she has set an example of the highest christian character: and that was to bring with her to her new mountain home as a part of her dowry, a Bible printed in the Welsh dialect. A noble exemplar! This is the first Bible that there is any record of having ever been brought to the waters of the Greenbrier.

"The date fixed by you as the time when John McNeel, Senior, arrived in the Levels, 1765, is correct. He was then in his 20th year, and now when we reflect that this was the year succeeding when the Indians had made the most fearful massacre of the white people in the Valley of Virginia, and the the Ohio River Valley was an unbroken wilderness, we wonder at the adventurous spirit of this remarkable man.

"Of the traditional history that I have heard of him the thing that impressed me most of all was his wonderful sincerity of character and strength of purpose in his daily life. This feature of his character had a powerful influence on his grandson, Paul McNeel, and contributed in no small degree to his success in after life. And in conclusion I will say that during the 27 years it was my pleasure to know my father, I never heard him mention the name of John McNeel, Senior, but with the words of praise upon his lips. And the deep hold that Methodism has held in the Levels of

Pocahontas for the last hundred years can be explained when I say that the man and woman who built the "White Pole Church" laid the foundation of the Methodist Church; and let us trust that the influence of this humble christian man and woman will descend from generation to generation, and like the mantle of Elijah prove a blessing on whomsoever it may fall."

JOHN SLAVEN.

One of the notable families in our local annals was the Slaven relationship, whose ancestor was John Slaven, who came from Tyrone, Ireland, about the middle of the previous century. He first settled in Rockingham County, and then came to what is now Highland County, Virginia, and located permanently at Meadow Dale, on property now held by Stuart Slaven and James Flesher. His wife was a Miss Stuart. Traces of the old home are still to be seen near James Flesher's residence, who is a descendant by the fifth remove.

In reference to John Slaven's sons, we learn that Henry and Reuben went to Ohio and settled in the famous Scioto Valley. Daniel Slaven located his home on Clinch River, Tennessee. Isaiah Slaven married Martha Stuart and went to Montgomery County, Ky. in 1792, about the time that State came into the union, and settled at Mount Sterling. William Slaven settled in Smith County, Tennessee.

Stuart Slaven remained on the homestead. His wife was a Miss Johnston, a daughter of Jesse Johnston.